



Utah's *WILD*  
Notebook



Fly fishing  
*The basics*

Get involved  
Volunteers



UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

# fishing

SPECIAL ISSUE OF WILDLIFE REVIEW MAGAZINE

**Bass**

*America's top game fish*

**Walleye**

*Increase your odds*



*An idea whose time has come*

**Blue Ribbon Fisheries**



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## Wildlife Review

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources  
Spring 2004



# SPRING 2004 Wildlife Review Fishing

UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

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At the dawn  
of the 2000s,  
there's a wide  
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sport fish  
species and  
opportunities  
to suit just  
about any Utah  
angler.

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



**KEVIN CONWAY,**  
DIRECTOR, UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES

**T**HANK YOU for picking up a copy of the Wildlife Review. With spring just around the corner, it's a great time to talk about fishing in Utah and that's what this issue is all about. We've come a long way in our state from the days when trout were the only sport fish pursued by "serious" anglers, and fly fishermen were few and far between.

I can remember a time not too many years ago at Deer Creek Reservoir when, asked if he'd caught anything, a typical angler might reply, "nah, just perch." It's ironic that, nowadays, yellow perch are highly prized by ice fishermen. Now, if you ask one of these hardly souls if they're catching anything they might reply, "nah, just a few trout." And, on any given day on the middle fork of the Provo River, fly fishermen outnumber spin fishermen about 50 to one. The circle is complete!

At the dawn of the 2000s, there's a wide diversity of sport fish species and opportunities to suit just about any Utah angler. The flagship of the state's

effort to create, expand and enhance quality angling opportunities has to be the Blue Ribbon Fisheries program. Created by former Governor Mike Leavitt in the late 1990s, this ambitious new program aims to designate and maintain several quality lakes, reservoirs, rivers and streams throughout the state as blue ribbon fisheries. Using a mix of management tools, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources will manage these waters to create quality angling opportunities. Even though "opportunity" doesn't always equate with numbers of fish in the creel or on the stringer, we know that a significant percentage of Utah anglers want this kind of experience on some waters in the state.

For those anglers looking for a more traditional experience, the Division maintains an aggressive trout-stocking program on most major trout waters in the state. Our hatchery and stocking personnel work hard all year to make sure there are plenty of catchable-sized rainbow trout in most trout waters statewide.

For the thousands of Utah citizens, especially children, who live along the Wasatch Front and can't travel too far to go fishing, we've developed and placed a great emphasis on our Community Fisheries Program. In recent years we have identified and created several community fisheries in and near urban areas which provide angling opportunities for the young, the elderly and the economically or physically challenged.

So you can see that there are plenty of opportunities for Utah anglers from every walk of life. I encourage all you anglers and would-be anglers to take advantage of what our great state has to offer. So get out, go fishing and good luck! 🐟

BY STEVE SCHMIDT

## THE BASICS OF

# Fly fish-

## *Getting started on a life-long sport*

**F**OR THOSE who venture into the sport of fly fishing, it can be somewhat intimidating and frustrating. Yet for many, the initial attraction to fishing with a fly rod is spawned by those very challenges. The real beauty of the sport is that it can be enjoyed at a level to suit any angler's needs. Fly fishing is a life-long sport. It will always provide challenges for the angler to conquer, but can also be executed at its most simple form.

The difference between other fishing techniques and fly fishing is the cast. Casting is also one of the more fascinating and beautiful aspects of the sport. In conventional styles of fishing, the weight of the lure propels the line through the air. In fly fishing, the weight of the line creates the energy necessary to deliver the fly to its target. This significant difference puts a little more emphasis on the cast and the need to dedicate time to learning proper casting techniques.

That said, you don't have to be the next Steve Rajeff (fly fishing's

reining casting champion) before you take to the water and catch your first trout. Using the most traditional of techniques, called a wet fly swing, and the most primitive of patterns will effectively yield a catch, regardless of

one's casting prowess or experience. Today these simple flies, whose origins go back to the very beginning of the sport, are called soft hackles. They come in a variety of sizes and colors and do a nice job of imitating many of the insects that trout eat. Simply cast one into the current, and let the river do the rest. Hang on, because the line is usually under tension when a trout takes your soft hackle, and the hits are hard.

For some, just the simple act of swinging a soft hackle is all that's needed to satisfy their fly fishing needs. For others, it's just one of a number of techniques that can be employed and learned to increase your success and fly fishing enjoyment.

Regardless of the type of fishing you do, you can't help but notice when a fish takes food off the surface of the water. Today, that simple act is called a "rise." From fly fishing's early beginnings, enthusiasts who observed such behavior began the pursuit of a pattern that would float on the surface of the water. These flies eventually became known as dry flies. Unlike the simple wet fly and the techniques used to fish them, the dry fly became a pattern of great com-



BRANDON ANDERSON

Fly fishing is communicating with nature – and friends or family.



plexity and rewards. Yet the approach to fishing a dry fly is no different than it was hundreds of years ago.

There are flies that imitate every stage of an insect's life, including the adult stage, which a dry fly resembles.

Aquatic insects in lakes, rivers, and streams go through a number

why trout and most other freshwater fish feed on this stage more than any other. Fly patterns that imitate this aquatic phase are called nymphs. They're designed and tied out of materials that allow the fly to sink. Like dry flies, they come in a wide

## "The difference between other fishing techniques and fly fishing is the cast."

of stages in their life cycle that are important for a fly angler to know. The first stage is that of a larvae or a nymph. This phase lasts longer than any other part of an insect's short life (in most cases, an aquatic insect's complete lifecycle is a year). That is

variety of sizes, shapes, and colors. Also, like dry flies, some are very close representations of the real thing. Other nymphs don't look like anything specifically in nature, but have proven to be effect fly patterns over time.

At some point (usually a year) the nymph will propel its way to the surface and transition from the larval stage to the adult stage. Flies that imitate this transitional stage of an insect's life are called emergers, half dry fly, half nymph. These flies ride in the surface film of the water. Insects that reach this stage are very vulnerable to hungry trout. Only recently has much attention been paid to this phase of an aquatic insect's life. As a result, there has been an outpouring of new and effective patterns that reflect this stage. This transition from nymph to adult represents what is referred to in fly fishing as "a hatch." These emerging insects will soon transform into winged-adult insects that will spend the remainder of their day living out of the water.

As was discussed earlier, adult insects are imitated with a dry fly. There is one other stage of an aquatic

insect's life that is also important to the fly fisher, the egg laying stage. This is when aquatic insects return to the river to lay their eggs. At this juncture in their life, insects are called "spinners" because they lie spent in the water — dying after releasing eggs into the water where they themselves hatched.

But aquatic insects aren't the only food sources for trout. Terrestrials are insects that live on the land. Insects such as grasshoppers, ants and beetles provide a very important food source for fish, especially later in the year. In Utah, one particular terrestrial insect — the Cicada — helped put the Green River and its great fly fishing on the map. Annually, this large flying insect emerges from beneath the soil of the canyons surrounding the Green River. They aren't the best fliers, so often times they find themselves trapped in the currents of the Green. This hatch is world famous and fly anglers travel from around the world to experience the great fishing it provides.

Other aquatic creatures that provide an integral part of a fish's diet are crustaceans. In the Provo River, for example, one of the most important food sources is a crustacean known as a sow bug. At one time, it was estimated that trout relied on sow bugs for 50 percent of their food. Another related crustacean, that is present in the Provo but is even more important to the food chain on the Green River, is a scud, or freshwater shrimp. These protein-rich morsels are common food sources in almost all of Utah's trout waters. Both of these food staples are imitated with fly patterns that are fished only subsurface, with a dead-drift presentation.

As they get larger, fish also feed on other fish. Those who fish lakes and reservoirs probably know this fact better than any other group of anglers, because fish in these bodies of water rely so heavily on fish as a food source. Utah's Strawberry Reservoir, which is recognized nationally as one of the countries' best still-water fisheries, is a great example. Strawberry's trout depend on a steady diet of min-



Trout like this are abundant in Utah's great fly fishing waters.

nnows and bait fish that boosts the numbers and size of the trout. Yet fly fishers as a whole seldom consider using fly patterns, called streamers, to imitate this important food group. Particularly in the spring and fall, when aquatic and terrestrial insect life is less active, these large flies, when fished properly, can produce large fish. Streamer fishing is an easy-to-employ technique that should be part of every fly angler's arsenal.

This information may seem like a lot to disseminate, but it's simple for anyone who fishes with a fly rod to use. It's not important that you know the names of these different creatures, but what they look like and how they fit into a fish's world.

Next time out, before entering the water, take some time to look around for insects that may be flying around. Check the bushes for recently hatched insects that are seeking safe harbor there. Look for trapped adult insects in nearby spider webs. These can often provide clues as to what to fish. Check

the surface of the water for fish rising or actively feeding. If there is nothing visibly apparent above the water's surface, pick up a submerged rock or two and see what larvae or nymphs you can find. This will not only help you learn what flies to fish that day, but will also lend insight into the types of insects living within that specific fishery. Simple observation will open the door to success and enjoyment.

As important as it is to learn to cast a fly rod and present a fly, it's equally significant to learn how to recognize the trout's food sources and their habits. Through this act of observing, you learn what to fish and how to best present a fly to imitate that food source. Rivers, streams, lakes, and reservoirs are your laboratories. They hold the key to your curiosity and success when fishing with a fly rod. These elements have fascinated fly anglers for centuries and will continue to do so for centuries to come. 🐟



The pleasure of landing a nice brown trout makes the time and effort invested in learning to fly fish worthwhile.



Utah has some world-class smallmouth bass waters that consistently produce trophy-sized smallmouth.

BY RANDY BRUDNICKI,  
PUBLICATIONS EDITOR

IT'S TIME TO GO

# Bass fish-

*America's number one game fish*

**F**OR A COLD-WATER, trout-oriented state, Utah has some pretty good bass fishing. If you want to catch a lot of bass and don't care much about size, you can do that. Or if you want to catch trophy-size bass, you can do that too.

## Black bass species

Let's begin with a little clarification. This article refers to black bass only — smallmouth and largemouth. Not white bass species such as striped bass, white bass or their hybrid, wipers. Black bass are members of the sunfish family and are closely related to bluegills and crappies. That's why they function best in warm water. That's also why we don't hear of or see many bass caught in the winter or through the ice, although it can happen.

## Metabolism

Bass are cold-blooded. Therefore, the feeding behavior of bass is related to metabolism, which is most often associated with water tempera-

ture. In other words, warmer water increases the bass's metabolism. That means that the digestive system works faster in warm water and the bass has to eat more often — making them more aggressive and easier to catch. Metabolism peaks when the water

temperature is about 74 to 76 degrees F. On the other hand, bass are pretty lethargic when the water temperature is below 49 degrees F, and above 85 degrees.

## Bass behavior

Of course, if hunger was the only thing to trigger a bass to strike, bass fishing could be tough — and maybe even boring. But bass are predators and there are lots of ways to get a bass to bite your lure. Bass may strike for many reasons: hunger, reflex, anger, feeding frenzy, opportunity, etc. And bass are cover-oriented, meaning they attack their prey from well-chosen hiding places, such as from behind rocks, trees or bushes, or from inside weed beds. Bass have short, deep body styles, which make it possible for them to attack with quick bursts of speed. At times, their strikes are vicious — and loud when they hit a surface lure.

In the mid-winter and mid-summer, bass are usually deep. In the late spring and fall, bass are usually shallow (but not always). Plan your fishing locations according to the time of year and water temperature. In cold water, bass may be as deep as 40 to 60 feet. In warm water, they may be in a foot of water or less. It doesn't take much of a warming trend to bring



Lake Powell is one of the top producers of smallmouth bass.



bass shallow, but a minor cold front may send them deep. Shallow bass are easier to catch than deep bass, so start shallow and work progressively deeper until you connect with them.

In the early spring, bass fishing is usually better in the afternoon or at mid-day. In the summer and early fall, fishing is usually better in the morning and evening.

This diversity in the bass's mood, location and attacking behavior is what makes bass fishing so exciting — and challenging.

Where to go?

Utah has some great bass waters located all over the state. And the Division of Wildlife Resources' Community Fishing program is putting an emphasis on bass and bluegills because these species do really well in warm, small ponds located at lower elevations. Here are some good bass fishing waters to try this year: Jordanelle, Deer Creek, Pineview, Echo, Rockport, Utah Lake, Steinaker, Red Fleet, Pelican, Quail Creek, Gunlock, Newcastle, Flaming Gorge and Lake

Powell. Some of these waters have an abundance of bass, so harvest is encouraged. This list isn't all-inclusive, however. There are bass in many other waters around the state.

**Equipment**

Bass fishing can be like golfing. There is a specific fishing rod for specific conditions, just as there is a specific golf club for different conditions or yardages. For example, one condition may call for a six-foot spinning rod with six-pound-test line, and another may require an eight-foot bait-casting rod with 30-pound-test line. Don't worry, you don't have to rush out and buy new equipment. For many conditions, the equipment you already own will work just fine. Also, a float tube or small boat is handy for moving around different waters. Because bass generally prefer shallow water and cover, they are usually near the shore, so walking the bank will also work great at many small waters.

Tackle

There are a greater variety of lures

for bass fishing than for any other species. But most bass are caught with a few basic lures. You need a few lures to fish on the bottom, a few for the surface and some for somewhere in between. Jigs and plastic worms probe the bottom easily. Top-water lures "splash" and "gurgle" or "pop," pulling bass to the surface. Spinnerbaits and crankbaits can be fished at various depths. These lures come in colors that match crawdads, shad, or bait fish, such as minnows or bluegills. Try to determine what the bass are feeding on and where they're feeding, and you'll know which lure to use.

Many of the lures bass anglers use have colorful, but strange names; spinnerbaits, crankbaits, buzzbaits, jerkbaits, stickbaits, grubs, hula grubs, gitbits, tubes, senkos, flukes, creature baits, jig'n'pig, spider jigs, poppers, chuggers, tiny torpedo, zara spook and so many more. These lures vary from soft plastic to hard plastic or wood bodies. There are times when any one of these lures will be more effective than the others. That's

where a lot of the fun in bass fishing comes from — in trying new lures and new techniques.

**Technique**

Now let's put all this together and develop techniques for catching bass. Casting and retrieving a fast-moving lure like a spinnerbait or crankbait works sometimes. Other times, working a lure on the surface produces wild strikes. Most of the time, however, you'll be working the bottom with a jig head and a grub, or a plastic worm. Crawdad-imitating colors work best in most of the reservoirs mentioned above except Lake Powell, where shad imitating colors are the key when shad numbers are high. Some of the easiest and most effective techniques also have strange names —

Carolina-rig (or split shot) and drop shot. To tie on a Carolina-rig, place a sliding sinker above a ball bearing swivel (no snap) and tie a worm hook or small grub hook on about a 14- to 18-inch leader (or pinch on a split

shot in place of the sliding sinker/swivel). If using the drop-shot method, the sinker is placed at the end of the line and the hook is tied on 14 to 18 inches above. (See diagram on opposite page.)

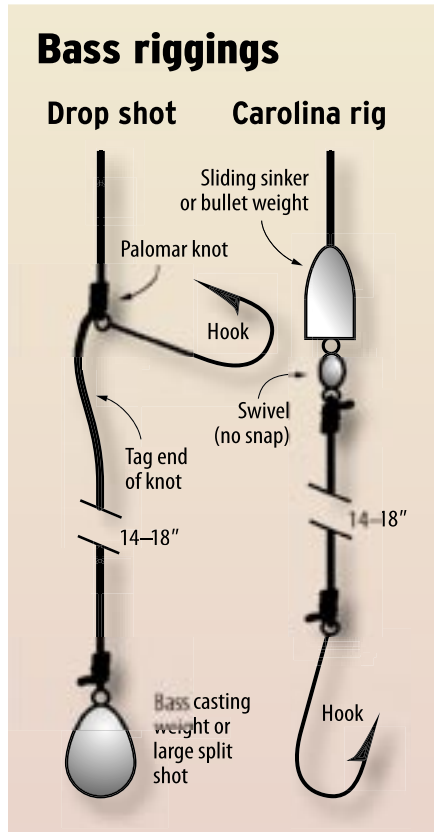
Most of the time, you'll want to fish slowly. Barely move the bait,

especially when fishing on the bottom. There are times, however, when the bass want a lure that's moving fast and erratic. Keep experimenting with retrieve speeds and lure depths until you start to catch fish. Sometimes bass will annihilate the lure, but most of the time the end of your line will just feel mushy, or you'll feel a "tick." Other times you won't feel anything but your line will start to move, or it will go slack. That's a strike — set the hook and hang on! And above all, have fun. 🐟

"Utah has some great bass waters located all over the state."



This photo needs a cutline. We need a cutline for this photo.



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BY JIM CARTER,  
BLUE RIBBON FISHERY ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER

FISHERIES PROGRAM — WHAT IS...

# Blue Ribbon?

*A good idea whose time has finally arrived*

**G**OVERNOR Michael O. Leavitt introduced the concept of Blue Ribbon fisheries in his State of the State Address in January 2001. He said Blue Ribbon fisheries would benefit the people of Utah and indicated he would ask the legislature for money for a Blue Ribbon Fishing initiative to improve fishing for the general public and to increase angling opportunities throughout the state. The governor also hoped this initiative would help the economic development of rural Utah, and the Blue Ribbon program can do just that.

While the legislature was deciding the amount of money to give the Blue Ribbon program, the governor held a meeting where he outlined the concept and the goals of the program. In attendance at this meeting on Feb. 6, 2001 were members of the Utah Legislature, the directors of the Department of Natural Resources and the Division of Wildlife Resources, members of angling organizations throughout Utah, and owners and operators

from the sporting goods industry. As the governor talked with and listened to experts from the group, he outlined and presented to them the Blue Ribbon Fishery concept and goals. He indicated he would appoint a 13-member council to work with the director of the Division of Wildlife Resources to:

1. Identify waters in Utah that could be designated as Blue Ribbon quality as they now exist.
2. Identify waters that could meet Blue Ribbon standards with help in the form of increased angler access, restoration work, improved water quality and better fishing.
3. Provide protection for Blue



The Provo River, above and below, Deer Creek Reservoir is full of brown trout.

Right fork of Huntington Creek offers an easy to fish, scenic experience for trout fishing.

BRENT STETLER



Ribbon waters to maintain the high quality of their fisheries.

4. Provide new angling experiences on waters that have not been available to anglers in the past.

5. Provide information about Blue Ribbon waters so the angling public could increase their angling experience and easily locate waters of Blue Ribbon quality.

6. Increase economic opportunities for rural Utah through the program.

7. Provide a legacy for Utah that includes quality streams and flat water areas the public can take pride in while enjoying the state's incredible beauty.

Utah State Legislative House Bill (HB) 338 was introduced in the 2001 Legislature. The bill set aside \$300,000 from the state's general fund for the "development and preservation of high quality aquatic systems to produce healthy fish populations for angling and aesthetic experience." The legislature passed the bill and Gov. Leavitt signed it into law on March 17,

2001 to become effective July 1, 2001.

With the passage of this law, Gov. Leavitt appointed 13 people representing angling organizations, retail trade, and the general public to serve on the Blue Ribbon Fishery Advisory Council (BRFAC), which would be administered by the Division of Wild-

at Blue Ribbon status, and waters that could reach that status with some help. To accomplish this task, the council met with the DWR, which had classified the state's waters years earlier. Council members met in each of the DWR's five regions and talked with aquatic biologists to get their

# Utah has much to offer the angling public through its Blue Ribbon Fishery program.

life Resources.

With the program's goals and concepts in hand, and \$300,000 provided through the legislature, the newly appointed council went to work, meeting monthly to decide how to accomplish the program's objectives.

The council first defined a mission statement, set goals and criteria for identifying waters that were now

input on the status of waters in their region. They then compared this information with the council's criteria for Blue Ribbon status. Each water was then discussed to determine that water's status and identify any areas of concern.

With this first step completed, council members compiled a list of waters in Utah that already met Blue Ribbon status. They then compiled

a second list of potential Blue Ribbon waters, noting why they were potentials. Criteria such as angler access, water quality, fish populations, water quantity, and the amount of major work it would take to meet the BRFAC standard were considered. With these two lists, the council held public meetings in each of the five regions to gather public input and to inform the public of waters in their region that met the criteria for Blue Ribbon fishing status, or had the potential to be Blue Ribbon waters.

The criteria for a water to be selected as a Blue Ribbon fishery were established as follows:

**Water quality and quantity:** A body of water, warm or cold, flowing or flat, will be considered for Blue Ribbon status if it has sufficient water quality and quantity to sustain a viable fishery.

**Water accessibility:** The water must be accessible to the public.

**Natural reproduction capacity:** The body of water should possess a natural capacity to produce and maintain a sustainable recreational fishery. There must be management strategies that will consistently produce fish of significant size and/or numbers to provide a quality angling experience.

**Angling pressure:** The water must be able to withstand angling pressure.

**Specific species:** Selection may be based on a specific species.

Since a significant amount of evaluation is required, the DWR aquatic staff from each region provides basic and scientific information. They also accompany the council on field trips to see waters their region feels are eligible for Blue Ribbon status. They also visit waters that need help and let council members know what help is needed. With this teamwork, the Blue Ribbon Fishery Advisory Council has been able to compile a list of waters meeting the criteria for Blue Ribbon status.

This list will be presented to Utah's five public Regional Advisory Councils and the Utah Wildlife Board



Lake Powell is one of Utah's best fishing and tourist attractions.

as an informational item. After this process is completed, the list will be sent to the director of the Division of Wildlife Resources for his approval. Once the waters are approved, Blue Ribbon status will be assigned to each one. Approved waters are then eligible for special protection and signage and publication as a Blue Ribbon fishery, which will help anglers locate top-quality fishing waters throughout Utah.

Accomplishments the Blue Ribbon Fisheries Advisory Council has realized to date include:

- Listed waters that now meet the standard for Blue Ribbon status.
- Listed waters which, with work, could become Blue Ribbon waters.
- Developed a funding source to provide money for the improvements required to upgrade potential waters.
- Provided a funding source to ensure that qualified, trained personnel do the actual work on upgrading projects.
- Requested law and regulation changes to protect the waters, fish, and the public money spent.
- Evaluated areas of concern that could affect Blue Ribbon fisheries.

• Developed close working relationships with the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, the School and Institutional Trust Lands Association, private land owners, American Indian tribes, and state and local governments, to ensure everyone is working together to maximize the monies available for these activities.

• Strived to keep the public informed of all activities within the Blue Ribbon program.

The Advisory Council is just that — an advisory council that puts a plan together to identify waters that meet Blue Ribbon fishery standards and then provides recommendations to the director of the Division of Wildlife Resources about which waters should receive Blue Ribbon status.

Blue Ribbon fisheries are not a new concept. Many states have used this concept for years to improve angling and increase angling satisfaction. Utah has much to offer the angling public and also has a chance to increase economic growth in Utah through its Blue Ribbon Fishery program. 🐟

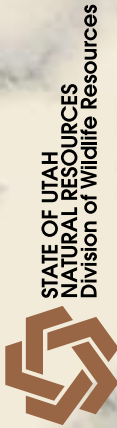


Just below Scofield Reservoir, the Price River (Lower Fish Creek) is a great "Blue Ribbon" destination.



UTAH'S

# Blue Ribbon Fisheries



## Flat waters

<b>Bear Lake</b> Fish: Bear Lake cutthroat, lake trout, Bonneville whitefish, Bear Lake whitefish, Bonneville Cisco	<b>Manning Meadows Reservoir</b> Native Bonneville cutthroat trout	<b>Scofield Reservoir</b> Rainbow and cutthroat trout	<b>Current Creek</b> (Hwy 40 to Currant Creek Dam) Rainbow, brown and cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish	<b>Green River</b> (Utah-Colorado state line to Flaming Gorge Dam) Rainbow, brown and cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish	<b>Strawberry River</b> (Red Creek confluence to Soldier Creek Dam) Brown, cutthroat and brook trout
<b>Flaming Gorge Reservoir</b> Rainbow, lake and brown trout, smallmouth bass, kokane salmon	<b>Mantua Reservoir</b> Fish: Rainbow and Bear Lake cutthroat trout, largemouth bass, bluegill, yellow perch	<b>Strawberry Reservoir</b> Bear Lake cutthroat and rainbow trout, kokane salmon	<b>Duchesne River</b> (Hwy 208 bridge to North Fork, Duchesne River) Brown, cutthroat and rainbow trout, mountain whitefish	<b>Lower Provo River</b> (Olmstead Diversion to Deer Creek Res. Dam) Brown, rainbow and cutthroat trout, white fish	<b>Weber River</b> (Gateway Diversion to Soddard Diversion) Brown, cutthroat and rainbow trout, mountain whitefish
<b>Jordanelle Reservoir</b> Smallmouth bass	<b>Panguitch Lake</b> Rainbow trout, Bear Lake cutthroat trout and some brook trout	<b>Woodruff Reservoir</b> Bonneville cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish.	<b>Duchesne River, West Fork</b> (Duchesne River confluence to headwater) Colorado River cutthroat and brown trout	<b>Middle Provo River</b> Brown, rainbow and cutthroat trout, white fish	<b>Weber River</b> (I-80 bridge upstream to Echo Reservoir) Brown, cutthroat and rainbow trout, mountain whitefish
<b>Kolob Reservoir</b> Rainbow and cutthroat trout	<b>Pelican Lake</b> Bluegill	<b>Asay Creek</b> (Mammath Creek confluence to Hwy 89 bridge) Brown and rainbow trout, mountain whitefish	<b>Huntington Creek, Left Fork</b> (confluence of Right Fork to headwater) Brown and cutthroat trout	<b>Price River</b> (Lower Fish Creek) (Hwy 6 Bridge to Scofield Dam) Brown, rainbow, and cutthroat trout	
<b>Lake Powell</b> Striped, largemouth and smallmouth bass, walleye, channel catfish, black crappie, bluegill and green sunfish	<b>Quail Creek Reservoir</b> Largemouth bass, blue gill and rainbow trout	<b>Blacksmith Fork</b> (first dam to Hardware Ranch) Brown and cutthroat trout mountain whitefish	<b>Huntington Creek, Right Fork</b> (Left Fk. confluence to Electric Lk. Dam) Brown, cutthroat and rainbow trout	<b>Strawberry River</b> (Duchesne R. confluence to Starvation Res. Dam excludes tribal land) Brown and rainbow trout	

For a complete description of the Blue Ribbon waters, visit the Utah Division of Natural Resources Web site: [wildlife.utah.gov/blueribbon](http://wildlife.utah.gov/blueribbon)



# BLUE RIBBON FISHERIES

## DESIGNATED BLUE RIBBON FISHERIES

# Locations

## *A sampling of Blue Ribbon Waters*

Although these waters share a unique designation, each body of water has its own value. Furthermore, Blue Ribbon designation does not allow for trespass on private property nor Native American Tribal land. More Blue Ribbon waters are detailed on the DWR Web page at: [wildlife.utah.gov/blueribbon/](http://wildlife.utah.gov/blueribbon/)

### Strawberry Reservoir

#### Location and description:

Strawberry Reservoir is the most popular fishery in Utah. Although the reservoir receives more than 1.5 million angling hours annually, it sustains a healthy population of fish. Strawberry is located 30 miles east of Heber City, along US-40. It's a large reservoir of 1,106,500 acre feet, or 17,164 surface acres. That allows anglers to distance themselves from other anglers on the reservoir and enjoy a quiet day of fishing in the picturesque setting of the Strawberry Valley. Strawberry is situated at an elevation of 7,550 feet in a valley surrounded by pine- and aspen-covered mountains, sage, wetland and grassy meadow areas. It's in the middle of the Uinta National Forest, providing easy access to the reservoir. The reservoir and Strawberry Valley are also a migration magnet for many species of wildlife.

#### Game fish species and methods:

The main species include rainbow trout, Bear Lake cutthroat trout and kokanee salmon. This water is heavily stocked with trout and is also becoming a favorite fishery for catching buckets-full of crayfish (there's no limit on crayfish but remember it's illegal to transport live fish or crayfish). New fish regulations have been put in place at the reservoir to protect the larger, predacious Bear Lake cutthroat trout. Larger cutthroats are important in controlling the chub

population in the reservoir. Special regulations apply to this water, be sure to read the current fishing proclamation. Anglers are encouraged to voluntarily release cutthroat and rainbow trout. Tributaries to the reservoir have special regulations (see the Fishing Proclamation). Fish in Strawberry are famous for rapid growth rates related to the abundant food supply in the reservoir.

Common angling methods include trolling, flies, lures, bait, casting jigs (from boats, kick-boats, float tubes, shore and ice fishing). Dark-colored wooly-buggers or leech patterns, tube jigs, minnow-imitating lures, and standard baits are most effective. Kokanee are generally found in deeper water (often in large schools). Jigging or down riggers are best for catching kokanee. A fish finder is very useful for locating schools of kokanee.

#### Access and facilities:

There are four boat ramps around the reservoir at Strawberry Bay Marina, Soldier Creek, Renegade and Aspen Grove. Boat rentals are available at Strawberry Marina, Soldier Creek Bay and Renegade. Accommodations include numerous motels and restaurants in Heber City; the Daniels Summit Lodge and Restaurant (800) 519-9969; and the Strawberry Marina and Lodge (435) 548-2261. There are many U.S. Forest Service campgrounds around the reservoir as well. For more camping information, contact the Heber Ranger District at (435) 654-0470.

### Green River

#### Location and description:

Located 42 miles north of Vernal, Utah, on US-191, the internationally recognized Green River is probably Utah's best-known fishery. This large river, 800 to 4500 cfs, begins at the base of Flaming Gorge Dam, elevation 5,594 feet, and winds for 28.8 miles until it crosses the Utah/Colorado border.

The river is naturally split into three reaches: The seven-mile upper reach, Tailrace (the Dam) to Little Hole, have paved roads to both boat ramps/walking access points. The nine-mile middle reach, Little Hole to Indian crossing in Browns Park, has access via a good dirt road as does the final reach, Indian Crossing to Swallow Canyon (Utah/Colorado border).

#### Game fish species and methods:

This world-renowned fishery supports high densities of large, healthy rainbows, browns and Snake River cutthroat trout. Special regulations apply to this water, be sure to read the current fishing proclamation. An artificial flies and lures only regulation, with a catch-and-release slot of 13- to 20-inch fish, protects the fishery from over harvest. The lesser-known mountain whitefish, a relative of the trout, also reaches trophy size in the Green. Excellent fishing is available from both the shore and boats.

Angler tip: imitate the natural foods. Match the hatches when midges, mayflies, and caddis flies emerge. Try grasshoppers and cicadas during the summer and shrimp/scud imitations are year-round favorites. Rapalas, spoons, jigs and other lures should imitate minnows and larger aquatic insects.

#### Access and facilities:

Modern lodging, food and other conveniences are available in Dutch John, Red Canyon and Manila, while developed and primitive camp sites provided by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management serve those interested in a more "wild, outdoor" experience.

### Provo River

#### Location and description:

The Provo River is the second most-utilized fishery in Utah. The stretch of the Provo River considered "blue ribbon" begins at the Olmstead Diversion area (about one mile east of Bridal Veil Falls in Provo Canyon) and proceeds easterly about six miles to the Deer Creek Reservoir Dam. From the Provo River inlet on the eastern side of Deer Creek Reservoir (located in the town of Charleston), this blue ribbon-quality river continues upstream through the town of Midway until it reaches the Jordanelle Reservoir Dam.

#### Game fish species and methods:

It's considered a Blue Ribbon fishery because of its abundant, self-sustaining brown trout population.

Rainbow trout, cutthroat trout and whitefish are also found in the Provo. Special regulations apply to this water, be sure to read the current fishing proclamation. Regulations for these portions of the Provo include "Artificial flies and lures only, trout limit: two under 15 inches." As of 2004, a 2.25-mile portion of this blue ribbon stretch between Midway and Deer Creek Reservoir allows bait angling and four trout of any species (read the Fishing Proclamation for details). The fishery actually has too many trout in some stretches, and anglers are encouraged to keep trout as permitted by the regulations to ensure that the remaining fish are fat and healthy. Popular techniques include using smaller-sized flies, such as a gold-ribbed hares ear, pheasant tail, scuds, midge imitations and other small nymphs or dry flies around size #18 or smaller. Patterns such as glo bugs, streamers, and minnow-imitating action lures are effective October through early December (during the brown trout spawn). General regulations that allow bait and no size restrictions are also easily accessible both below and above the blue ribbon stretches (see proclamation).

#### Access and facilities:

Angling access on these stretches of the river has been greatly improved over the last few years. The Provo Canyon portion of the river parallels US-189 and, with the exception of a few parcels of private property, access is not a problem. Although there are a few more parcels of private property surrounding the stretch between Deer Creek and Jordanelle Dam, several parking areas and angler access points have been created along the river and there is plenty of public angling opportunity.

Numerous motels, restaurants, sporting good stores, equipment rentals, and guide services are available in Provo, Orem, Heber City, Midway, Park City, Salt Lake City, and other towns. Raft, kayak, and other recreational equipment may be rented from places such as BYU Outdoors Unlimited (801) 422-2708, High Country Rafting Company in Provo Canyon (801) 224-2500, or from several other sporting good stores.

### Scofield Reservoir

#### Location and description:

The Scofield Reservoir turn-off lies about half way between Spanish Fork and Price on US-6. From the junction of US-6 and SR-96, travel in a southwest direction for approximately 12 miles. The reservoir is about 2,815 surface acres in size, and sits at an elevation of 7,618 feet. Scofield receives a high amount of angler pressure.

#### Game fish species and methods:

Scofield has rainbow and cutthroat trout, and, is popular for shore, boat, float tube, kick boat, and ice



Flowing through Provo Canyon, the Provo River affords great fly fishing.

anglers. It freezes earlier and thaws earlier than most other large lakes, offering good early season ice fishing and shore fishing opportunities. The early ice-out provides a unique bank fishing opportunity sooner than on many reservoirs in Utah. No special fishing regulations other than a trout limit of four. Zooplankton, midges, fish, and crayfish make up the priamry forage for the trout.

#### Access and facilities:

Nearest motels are in Price, Spanish Fork, and Fairview. There are developed campgrounds at Scofield State Park and in the city of Scofield. Undeveloped camping opportunities are available on nearby National Forest lands. A restaurant and convenience store are located in the city of Scofield. There are two boat ramps in Scofield State Park.

Much of the shoreline is privately owned. Access to the west shore is provided as a result of an informal landowner agreement. Areas on the northeast and southeast part of the reservoir are available to shore anglers. Year-round automobile access is available, except not on the west side of the lake. However, there is seasonal vehicle access to the west side. Access to private lands on the west side is available through landowner agreements.

### East Fork, Sevier River

(Otter Creek Reservoir Diversion to Confluence with Deer Creek)

#### Location and description:

Located in Garfield County, the stream runs for 11.5 miles along the county road between Bryce

Canyon National Park and the town of Antimony. The average elevation along this stretch is about 6,500 ft. Typical summer water flows are about 30 cfs and the stream is about 20 feet wide. This stream is located in a beautiful scenic setting. Extensive stream restoration work has been completed and is continuing in order to enhance the already excellent trout habitat found in this stream.

#### Game fish species and methods:

The East Fork contains brown trout that are annually stocked as fingerlings. Occasionally cutthroat, and rainbow trout are stocked as well. As the habitat improves, natural reproduction will supplement the stocked populations. At this time, minimal natural reproduction occurs. Special regulations apply to this water, be sure to read the current fishing proclamation. The special regulations apply to the section downstream from the mouth of Deer Creek, where flies and lures must be used and only two trout may be taken. Upstream from Deer Creek, general statewide rules apply. Fishing pressure is generally light on the east fork. Anglers have found success using flies and lures that imitate other fish, caddisflies, mayflies, stoneflies, and terrestrial insects.

#### Access and facilities:

Ownership of the land around the stream is a mix of BLM, Division of Wildlife Resources and private. A small store and restaurant is located at Antimony and a campground is located at nearby Otter Creek Reservoir State Park. Access is good from the paved (SR-22). Parking and stream access is available at Wildlife Resources and BLM land.





SCOTT ROOT

Jordanelle Reservoir is becoming a smallmouth haven. Some bass are approaching eight pounds.

## Pineview Reservoir

### Location and description:

Eight miles east of Ogden Utah on SR-39 anglers can find Pineview Reservoir as one of Utah's pretty "back yard" fishing holes. Pineview has a great variety of habitats: gravel beds for spawning crappie; rocky shoreline for smallmouth bass; marshy areas and flooded willows that provide protection for large-mouth bass and bluegills as well as the perfect "hide" for the stealthy tiger muskie. As the waters recede in the hot summer months, mud bars in the north arm hold good numbers of black bullheads. Smallmouth bass have become more numerous in recent years and have provided lots of success, especially in the "narrows" in the west part of the reservoir.

### Game fish species and methods:

Pineview has transitioned from a cold water to a warm water fishery that supports largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, black crappie, bluegill, tiger muskie and black bullhead. Spring and summer are great times to fish for crappie, as the water gets warmer. The hot summer months provide excellent fishing for black bullheads that receive very little fishing pressure and are considered an under-utilized sport fish at Pineview. Tiger muskie, referred to as a "fish of a thousand casts" start to increase their activity in spring, remain active through the summer, and have a "last hoorah" feeding binge in the fall. Special regulations apply to this water, be sure to read the current fishing proclamation.

Pineview is a fishery that relies heavily on keeping a good number of predator fish to keep panfish like bluegill, yellow perch and crappie from overpopulating. This is important for anglers to keep in mind because there are rules that require that certain sizes of fish be released. Adhering to these rules will help keep the balance between predators and prey. Because of the predators, most of the fishing is done with lures with the exception being black bullheads and yellow perch that offer good fishing with baits such as night crawlers, fished off the bottom.

### Access and facilities:

The reservoir is located on U.S. Forest Service Property and has many access points for anglers to fish from shore. Popular foot access areas include Middle Inlet, Anderson Cove and Skyline trailhead. The Port and Cemetery Point boat ramps offer boat launching. Camping is available at Anderson Cove and Jefferson Hunt campgrounds. There are also resort condominiums in Eden, Liberty and Huntsville.

## Jordanelle Reservoir

### Location and description:

Jordanelle Reservoir is situated between Heber City, Midway, and Park City along US-40. This large reservoir sits at an elevation of 5,961 feet and has 360,000 acre feet and 3,300 surface acres.

### Game fish species and methods:

Although this newer reservoir is most popular for its great smallmouth bass fishery (with some bass

going over four pounds) it also has a healthy population of rainbow trout, brown trout, and yellow perch. Special regulations apply to this water, be sure to read the current fishing proclamation. Regulations state, however, that the bass limit is six and all bass over 12 inches must be immediately released. For smallmouth bass, look for rocky points or submerged structure. Using a jig or minnow-imitating lure near these areas is an effective bass technique. It's heavily stocked with rainbow trout each year, and biological sampling has shown an abundance of yellow perch. Traditional baits, flies, or lures are used for trout from boats, float tubes, or from shoreline. Regulations for 2004 will allow a limit of 50 perch. Perch also prefer small jigs or active lures tipped with bait.

### Access and facilities:

Much of the reservoir is surrounded by steep inclines, making shoreline access a little difficult in places. Most access occurs from the two state park locations at Hailstone and Rock Cliff. There are two boat ramps at the Hailstone Marina (one large boat ramp and one smaller for personal watercraft). There is also a launching area at the Rock Cliff area (the Provo River arm of the reservoir).

There are numerous motels and restaurants in the cities surrounding the reservoir or at Jordanelle's Hailstone Marina and restaurant (435) 649-9540. State park facilities at Hailstone include many camping areas, boat slip rentals, and numerous luxuries associated with modern campgrounds. Call 1-800-322-3770 for more information or reservations. 🐟

BY RAY SCHELBLE,  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN ANGLERS

## TOOTHY TORPEDOES

# Walleye

*Increase your odds with a few basics*

**T**HE SECRET'S OUT! Utah is home to some pretty good walleye fishing. More and more anglers are discovering that these big-eyed, toothy torpedoes taste good and that chasing them is fun. If you want to get in on the action, here are some tips to get you started:

### Walleyes: where and when?

Utah has five prime walleye waters. Utah Lake, the only natural lake among the five waters, has perhaps the longest and deepest tradition of walleye fishing in Utah. Willard Bay is another water whose walleye tradition goes way back. In spite of large numbers of small walleyes, Starvation has earned a reputation among serious anglers for producing large, trophy-sized fish. Deer Creek has had some good walleye fishing the last couple of years, but the recent down cycle of perch, the primary forage for the reservoir's walleyes, will likely make walleye fishing iffy there in the near future. Lake Powell has some good walleye fishing, notably in areas near the Hite end of the lake and in

spring to fall — all during daylight hours. These anglers catch fish, and you can too.

### Mobility and flexibility

Catching walleyes consistently requires you to be mobile and flexible. Walleye are often found near

structure, but they don't necessarily stay in one place from one day to the next, or even one hour to the next. Mobility, such as the mobility a boat provides, is a great advantage. It doesn't have to be a big, fancy boat, just something to get you out and about. Plenty of walleyes are caught from small boats.

As for flexibility, base your fishing on what the fish want, not on what you want to do that day. Anglers use three main methods to put walleyes in the boat: rigging, jigging and cranking.

**Rigging** is a live bait trolling technique that uses any of a variety of sinkers and a worm harness to cover ground. A two-ounce bottom bouncer (a lead weight fastened to wire bent at a right angle) is commonly used when rigging to keep the bait in the strike zone, which is near the lake bottom. It's a great way to find walleyes or to catch them when they're scattered. "Usually I like to rig until I can find them [and] get a bite. [Then I] throw a marker out and go back," says Kevin Lund of Rocky Mountain Anglers. "If I catch two, then I'll stop and drop jigs on them." More on using jigs later.

Some points to consider when



RAY SCHELBLE

Walleyes don't receive much fishing pressure but the quest is worth it.



Trolling bottom bouncers is a good way to cover lots of water until you locate a school of walleyes.



the Escalante arm, but walleyes can be difficult to locate. Unfortunately, Yuba (Sevier Bridge) Reservoir was drained in 2003 for dam repairs. Although it's legal to keep a limit of walleyes there, anglers are not likely to see walleyes in large numbers there for several years.

For years, conventional wisdom in Utah held that the best time (and some believed the only time) to catch walleye was in the early spring, during the "walleye run" when they spawn. Walleyes prefer to spawn on shallow, rocky shorelines, or in tributaries, which concentrates them and brings them within range of shore anglers. Beginning in February each year, the buzz in angling circles centers around when the walleye will "run" at Utah Lake and other waters. Each year, often-repeated stories of huge fish and easy pickings abound during this time period. In reality, though, spring brings far more stories of anglers getting skunked and beaten by the elements.

"I think the spawn is one of the worst times to fish for walleyes," says Tom Pettengill, sport fisheries coordinator for the DWR and a serious walleye angler. "Occasionally, fishermen will really get into some fish during the spawn," he explains, "but I think post-spawn and pre-summer, that time when the water temperature is 60 to 70 degrees F., is a lot better time to fish for walleyes." Once the water reaches that 60- to 70-degree range in May or June, walleye fishing can get pretty good at most waters.

At some waters, walleye fishing may slow down during the heat of the summer as natural prey becomes more available. Fall is generally a good time to try for trophies as the fish load up on food for the winter.

Another bit of conventional wisdom is that walleyes can only be caught at night or in low light. Although low light or darkness can provide outstanding walleye fishing, they can be caught any time of the day. Consider that many walleye tournaments are held in Utah from

rigging:

- Although any tackle will work, a revolving spool reel and a rod that will support the weight of a heavy sinker, with up to 10-pound-test line, is ideal.

- Hook the night crawler in the nose with the front hook, and set the other hooks so the crawler will be straight out when trolled.

- A bait harness can legally have up to three hooks in Utah. A third hook can help catch short-biting walleyes but adds extra weight. Leaders are commonly 18 to 36 inches long.

- As you troll, let out only enough line to keep the bottom bouncer in contact with the bottom, and continually adjust it up or down as the depth changes. Letting out too much line will result in lots of snags and no walleyes.

- To start with, have an assortment of popular spinner blade sizes (2, 3 and 4), styles (Colorado and Indiana) and colors (chartreuse, orange, red, white, chrome, brass, and combinations such as chartreuse/orange).

- Experiment with depth and speed. Another conventional wisdom holds that you have to fish slowly for walleyes. When they're active, walleyes may ignore slow trolled rigs, but they'll pound them when trolled at unbelievably fast speeds. As you

speed up or troll deeper, switch to a heavier bottom bouncer that's up to three or four ounces.

- When a walleye hits your rig, resist the urge to give it a big hook set. You'll lose the fish. Dip the rod back toward the fish, then smoothly sweep it forward and start reeling.

**Jigging** involves using lead head hooks and is a great way to approach walleyes that are concentrated near structure. As Lund mentioned earlier, once you find walleyes, jigs can be a good option. Some points to consider when jigging:

- As a general rule, use the lightest jig that will still allow you to feel what's happening at the end of your line. Weights in the 1/16- to 1/4-ounce range are common, but lighter or heavier often make a difference.

- Jigs can be fished a variety of ways. They can be cast and retrieved at just about any speed, "jigged" with any variety of lift-and-drop motions, or fished vertically right under the boat.

- Fish often hit jigs as they fall, so watch your line for any unusual movement or if the line goes slack before it hits bottom. A walleye bite is often nothing more than a slight twitch in the line, or a slight "tick."

- Tipping jigs with a piece of night crawler often helps, even when using plastic bodies.



A well-stocked arsenal is important to the walleye fisherman.



- Generally, fish near the bottom. As the jig falls after a cast, your line will remain reasonably tight. When the jig hits bottom, the line droops suddenly (this droop could also mean a walleye has picked it up.)

**Cranking** is a term for fishing with diving lures that are commonly called crankbaits. Crankbaits can be trolled or cast and retrieved. Some points to consider when using crankbaits:

- Six- to 10-pound-test line is commonly used with crankbaits.
- Vary your trolling or retrieve speed, and change colors if what you're doing isn't working.
- In general, the size of the bill on the crankbait determines how deep it will dive.
- For presentations to deeper walleyes, you can troll crankbaits with leaded line, wire, a bottom bouncer,

or a snap weight.

- Good colors for Utah include crawdad, silver, white, chartreuse, perch, gold, or combinations of these.

#### Getting better

Other fish may be easier to catch and still others may fight better, but you won't find any that taste better. The good news is that keeping a limit of smaller walleyes for dinner actually helps our walleye fisheries by keeping these voracious predators in check.

Many anglers may find catching walleyes a bit daunting at first, but there are several helpful resources. Ask anglers who are having success on the water. Most will be glad to tell you what they're doing, but make sure you approach them slowly, quietly, and carefully while they're fishing. You can also pick the minds at your favorite tackle shop. The Internet has numerous resources about walleyes,

including the Division of Wildlife Resources Web site ([wildlife.utah.gov/fishing/](http://wildlife.utah.gov/fishing/)), [UtahOutdoors.com](http://UtahOutdoors.com), [www.WalleyeCentral.com](http://www.WalleyeCentral.com), and many others.

Watch for opportunities to learn from people who fish for Utah's walleyes. Joining a fishing club like Rocky Mountain Anglers ([www.RockyMountainAnglers.com](http://www.RockyMountainAnglers.com)) which gives you a chance to talk to and fish with people who started out just like you. The club also provides a way to support activities that benefit Utah's fisheries. Finally, attend a class. Each spring, Rocky Mountain Anglers and the DWR put on informative free walleye fishing seminars. Also, watch for the RMA booth at the International Sportsman's Expo each spring and club members who teach classes at the show.

There, you have it. Now what are you waiting for? Let's get out there and catch some walleyes! 🐟



TIM KNEPP COURTESY OF U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

Walleyes travel in small schools so locating one fish signifies more are in the area.



## UTAH'S WILD NOTEBOOK

BY DIANA VOS,  
PROJECT WILD COORDINATOR

### EDUCATING ABOUT WILDLIFE

# Sensible

*A resource for educators and youth*

**H**AVE YOU EVER thought about what it would be like to be a fish swimming in a pond or stream? Living in water is much different than living on land. Although fish have all the same senses that people do — they can see, hear, smell, feel and taste — they use their senses in ways much different than people. To get an idea of how fish sense their watery world, you don't need to jump into a lake. Just read on.

#### Seeing through the eyes of a fish

Only a small amount of the light people can see reaches below the water's surface. So, there isn't really much light in a fish's world. On land people can often see for miles. In murky water fish can only see less than an inch away. Even in clear water they can't see very far. Most fish in fact are nearsighted and can only see a distance of 10 to 20 feet. How deep the water is also affects the amount of light there is. Light usu-

ally only reaches a few feet down so the deeper you go, the darker it gets. With less light, fewer colors can be seen.

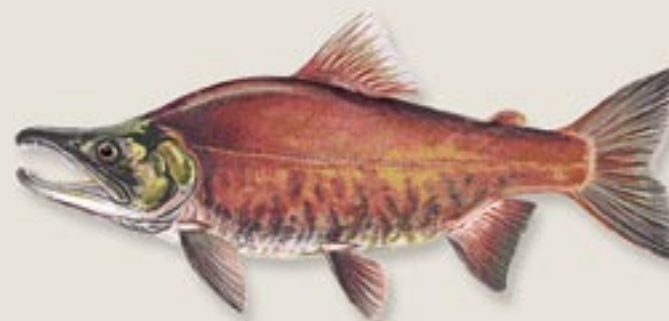
Fish such as blue gill, trout and minnows that feed during the day have very good vision and can see in a wide range of colors. Many kinds of fish can actually see color. Some can see at least 24 different shades of color.

Night feeders such as walleye and crappie trade good color vision for the ability to see well when there is not much light. Some of these fish have a special layer called the *tapetum lucidum* on the back insides of their eyes. This layer amplifies light going into the fish's eye by reflecting it back through the eyes of the fish a second time. Some of the light that is not absorbed by the eyes shines back out. This makes the fish's eyes glow in the dark. Nocturnal fish and those that live in deep water also have bigger eyes. Bigger eyes can capture more light and help the fish see better.

The lenses in the eyes of fish are round in shape. These round lenses are what lets them see clearly under water. If you were to open your eyes under water everything would look blurry. This is because the lenses in the eyes of people are flat instead of round. The lenses in fish eyes also bulge out through the iris (the col-

#### Kokanee

Kokanee are a kind of landlocked sockeye salmon. Though landlocked, they, like other sea-going salmon, journey back to spawn in the stream in which they hatched. They use their sense of smell to find their way back to their specific stream and gravel bar.



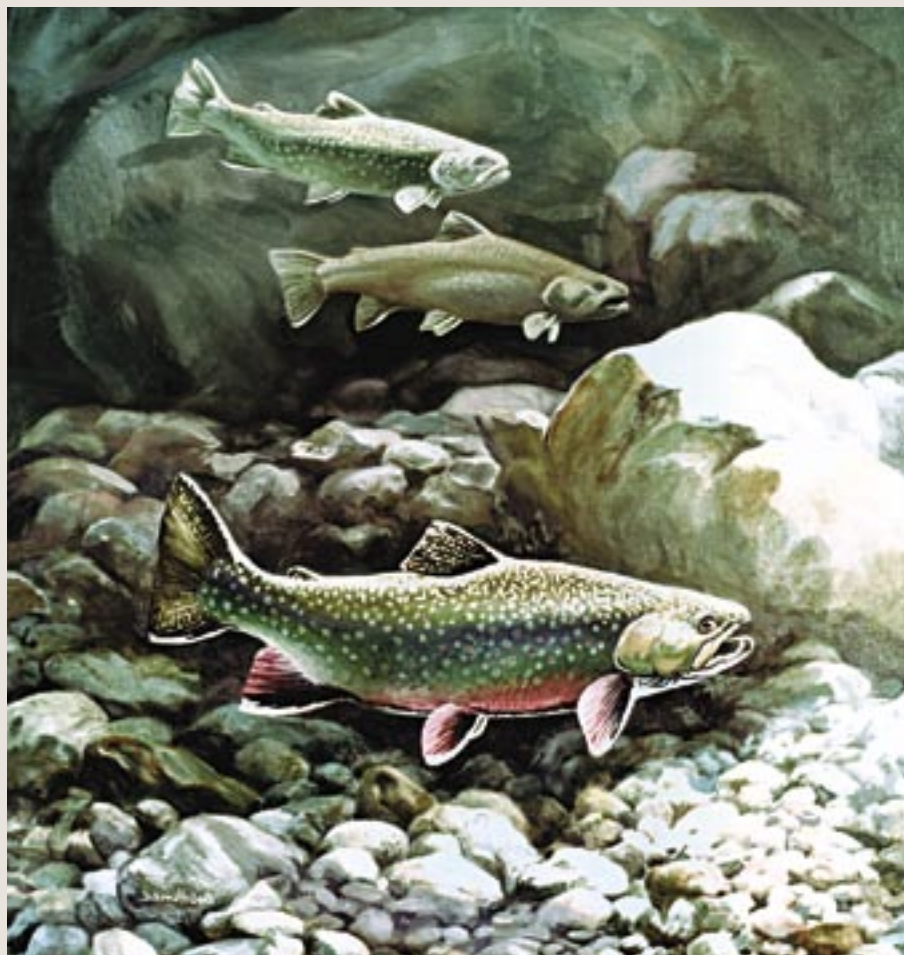
#### Tiger Muskie

This fish is a hybrid of the northern pike and muskellunge. A solitary hunter, it lurks in cover then lunges after suitable prey that comes its way.





## UTAH'S WILD NOTEBOOK

**Brook trout**

ored part of the eye). This keeps a fish from being able to shrink its pupils in bright sunlight. That's why fish that

live in shallow water hang out in shaded areas. Fish also don't have any eyelids or tear glands. Since they live

in water and their eyes are always wet, tears for dry eyes are not needed. It also means a fish would win in a staring contest.

Fish eyes are best designed for seeing things that stand out from or contrast with the water around them. They also notice movement very well. A lightly colored moving object that shows up well against a dark background of water would likely catch a fish's eye. Though fish see contrast and movement well, most fish are not able to judge depth well. They see most things as flat, like looking at a picture of an object. People instead can see in 3-D. They can judge distances and shapes because their eyes face forward. The eyes of fish though are located on either side of their head. This makes it hard for them to tell how far away something is. Some predatory fish, like tiger muskies, that do need to know how far away something is so they can catch prey, have special grooves on their noses. These low areas let them see forward more easily giving them some sense of depth.

Instead of having 3-D vision, fish have excellent peripheral, or side vision. Fish can use each eye on its own to see things beside and even slightly behind them. They can also see what's above them. Many trout

**Rainbow trout**

Native to streams of the Pacific Coast, rainbows live in cool, clear headwater creeks and larger streams. Here they seek out aquatic insects, snails, crayfish and small fish to snap up in their jaws.

**Channel catfish**

Barbels hang from a catfish's face like a strange looking moustache. Barbels are actually fleshy structures. Catfish use their barbels to sense things they might eat.



## UTAH'S WILD NOTEBOOK

anglers know this and try to keep a low profile when moving towards a fish so they won't be spotted.

**Do fish smell? Do they taste good (well) too?**

Fish do have a nose, but they don't breathe through it. But they still can smell very well. Fish can smell much better than people can and even better than a bloodhound. A fish's nostrils (*nares*) are found on its snout but they are not connected to the fish's throat. Most fish have at least two nostrils, but some have four or more. Inside the nostrils are millions of smell receptors that pass smell signals to the fish's brain. Fish respond to some odors by instinct and learn to recognize others over time.

Some fish use smell more than vision. Smell is used to find food and to sense danger. Both predatory fish and scavenger fish use odor to search for food. Scavenger fish use smell as their main sense to find food. Predators only use smell to make sure something they have found by sight or hearing is actually food. Some fish also use smell to tell them where to lay their eggs. Fish such as salmon that migrate use their noses to smell the odor of their home stream.

Fish are also good tasters. Their tongue is covered with taste buds that

can taste chemicals in the water. In many species, taste buds cover other parts of the body too such as the fish's fins, face and area near their tail. These fish can taste food before taking it into their mouth. Taste buds are wired to areas of the brain that operate reflexes. So snapping or biting at some tasty bait is an automatic reflex in most fish.

Most fish can taste pretty well, but catfish are virtual "swimming tongues." They are literally covered from head to tail with taste buds. Because of this, catfish can find food that is quite far away even in murky water. Many of a catfish's taste buds are packed into whisker-like barbels on its face that it drags along the lake bottom as it searches for food.

**Can fish hear?**

Water is much denser than air so sound travels much faster in water than it does in air. Because of this, sound plays a very important role for fish. Even so, you have probably never seen a fish's ear. That's because they don't have outer ears. They do have ears inside their head though. The ears of fish are made up of bones called *otoliths*. The ear bones vibrate with pressure created by sound waves. The vibrations wiggle small hairs in the fish's ears sending a sound message to the fish's brain. Fish, like bass,

sometimes flee from noisy motors or approach sound-making lures. Scientists believe that at least some species of fish talk to each other with grunts, pops and squeaks they make.

**Feeling in the water**

Like people, fish can sense touch or pressure on their skin with normal touch receptors. They also have another special system known as the lateral line that senses vibrations and pressure better. The lateral line is a long thin groove that runs down each side of a fish's body from behind the gills to the base of the tail. Along the groove of the lateral line are hair-like nerve endings (*neuromasts*) set into a jelly-filled canal under the skin or scales. When the hairs are pushed by pressure from the water the fish can pick up movements of other critters nearby. The hairs also sense low-frequency sounds, speed of water currents and pressure waves that build up as the fish moves towards something in its way. The lateral line helps fish travel through murky water, find food, travel at night, stay together in a school, avoid enemies and even sense water temperature.

Now you have a sense of what it's like to be a fish in its watery world.

**Walleye**

You can't miss the walleye's big silvery eyes. At night, this large predator uses those eyes to hunt shad, perch and other fish it finds in the backwaters of rivers and reservoirs where it lives.

**Largemouth bass**

In clear waters good vision aids these fish in chasing down and engulfing other fish. In low light conditions, hearing and their highly developed lateral line help them find their meal.





## UTAH'S WILD NOTEBOOK

**Through the senses of a fish!**  
**Student activity:**

Pick one of the fish that are mentioned and pictured in this reading.

Next, based on the information in the reading think about where your fish would likely live. Would it live near the surface or in deeper water? Would it hide in weeds or out in open waters? Then draw your fish in a lake or stream.

After that, draw in the things your fish might sense in its environment on a typical day in its life. Draw in things it might see, feel, hear, taste, smell or sense with its lateral line such as vegetation, things it would eat, lures of anglers, other fish and the like.

If your fish sees in color draw the things in color. If it does not see color, use gray and brown colors. You can label the things in your drawing to show if they are things your fish will see, hear, feel, taste, smell etc.

If you want to learn more about your fish's lifestyle, you can look at a fish field guide, or check out some Web site pages such as:

wildlife.utah.gov/projectwild/fishes.htm  
or  
www.enature.com/guides/select\_Fishes.asp

**It's WILD!**

Project WILD activities for teachers and students that correlate to this topic include the following:

- Fishy Who's Who
- Interview a Spider
- Fashion a Fish (focus on fish)
- Seeing is Believing!
- Sockeye Scents

**WILD about reading:  
books for learning more**

– Peterson Field Guides: Freshwater Fishes by Lawrence M. Page and Brooks M. Burr, Houghton Mifflin, 1991.

– Peterson First Guide to Fishes of North America by Michael Filisky, Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

– Crinkleroot's 25 Fish Every Child Should Know by Jim Arnosky, Simon and Schuster, 1993.

– Freshwater Fish and Fishing by Jim Arnosky, Four Winds Press, 1982.

– Freshwater Fish by Bernice Brewster, Bookwright Publishers, 1988.

– The World of Freshwater Fish by Thomas D. Fegely, Dodd Mead, 1978.

– About Fish: A Guide for Children by

Catheryn P. Sill, Peachtree Publishers, 2002.

– Fish by Steve Parker, Eyewitness Books, Knopf Publishing, 1990.

– What Is a Fish? by Allison Larin and Bobbie Kalman, Crabtree Publishers, 1998.

**WILD educator resources  
and happenings**

– Utah Fish Posters: Contact Project WILD for information

– Interactive Fish ID Flashcards: Excellent fish education Web site: [www.cnr.colostate.edu/~brett/fw300/flashcrd/](http://www.cnr.colostate.edu/~brett/fw300/flashcrd/)

– Fish Videos for checkout from Project WILD:  
(Available for Project WILD-trained educators only)

- Bill Nye The Science Guy: Fish
- Fascinating Fishes
- Fish: Eyewitness Video

– WILD About ELK: Advanced Project WILD Educator Training, June 18-19, 2004. Details and registration form on Project WILD Web site.

**Bluegill**

Warm seedy ponds, sloughs and small lakes are home for bluegills, a type of sunfish. Like their name implies, they wear blue scales around their gills. They eat aquatic insects, small crustaceans and snails, and in turn make a good meal for bigger predatory fish.

**Getting WILD**

Utah's WILD Notebook is produced by Utah's Project WILD program. (Note: this publication is now replacing Project WILD's *Growing WILD /Nature's Call* publication.) WILD workshops, offered by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, provide teachers and other educators with opportunities for professional development and a wealth of wildlife education activities and materials for helping students learn about wildlife and its conservation. For a current listing of Project WILD educator workshops, visit the Project WILD Web site at [wildlife.utah.gov/projectwild](http://wildlife.utah.gov/projectwild) or e-mail [DianaVos@utah.gov](mailto:DianaVos@utah.gov).



BY SCOTT ROOT,

CENTRAL REGION CONSERVATION OUTREACH MANAGER

**DEDICATED HUNTER & OTHER****Volun-***Preserving the Strawberry Valley*

THE STRAWBERRY VALLEY is valuable to people and wildlife. Because of its attractive habitat, it serves as a migration magnet for countless numbers of wildlife. People are also drawn to the area by the abundant fish, wildlife, timber, and water resources that this lush mountain valley in north-central Utah provides.

Diverse, competitive interests have struggled in the Strawberry Valley ever since the first settlers arrived. Records provided by the USDA Forest Service's Uinta National Forest show the early American settlers had actually depleted many of the resources in the Uinta and Wasatch mountain ranges by 1890. Thankfully, the federal government created "Forest Reserves" in 1897. In 1907, these areas were renamed "National Forests" and the newly formed United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service began its goal of transforming severely impacted forests into healthy, productive ones. During these early years, the Utah Fish and Game Department also played a large role in protecting and

restoring wildlife in these forested areas throughout Utah.

History shows how quickly we can damage and diminish fragile habitats and wildlife populations when we take more than we give.

Restoring these damaged resources has been a complex, yet enjoyable, effort among federal, state and local governments that have worked

side-by-side to ensure a healthy forest ecosystem. Much of the hands-on work that kept areas like the Strawberry Valley healthy was done by volunteers partnering with these groups. Since 1907, thousands of volunteers have played a major role in providing the groundwork for the completion of habitat improvement projects in the valley. Patricia Musser, Uinta National Forest volunteer coordinator for the Heber Ranger District, is instrumental in organizing USFS volunteer efforts in Strawberry Valley. She says that within the last six years alone, volunteers have provided almost \$450,000 worth of labor in the Heber Ranger District's area. Much of this volunteer work happened in the Strawberry Valley. This equates to about 22,000 documented hours of work over this 6-year span.

Volunteer help ranges from individuals to large, organized groups that want to preserve the Strawberry Valley as the settlers found it. These volunteers have been vital in completing work that has allowed visitors to return to this pristine valley to recreate. Many visitors to the Strawberry Valley use the area to escape the concrete and office cubicles of the city. Thanks to restoration efforts and proper management, you can



Strawberry Reservoir is Utah's most important fishery.



walk through the area and enjoy the same scenery that Franciscan priests Dominguez and Escalante found when they explored it in 1776. This is a good example of a forest, situated close to metropolitan areas, that remains in a condition similar to the day settlers came to the area.

Volunteers are a big part of this success. Some of the habitat and wildlife projects completed over the last six years include:

- posting regulation signs
- passing out literature to anglers
- spray marking fish
- fish stocking assistance
- Free Fishing Day help
- spawning run help
- planting projects
- fence removal
- fence construction
- seeding projects
- erosion control
- trail maintenance
- livestock exclosure projects
- water rights work
- road building
- dispersed recreation rehab.
- unauthorized fire pits removed
- litter clean up
- spawning gravel projects
- gully plugs
- water developments
- recreation maintenance
- gillnetting assistance
- concrete work
- painting
- noxious weed control
- bank stabilization
- and countless other projects....

Although there are a few man-made fences, signs, and structures in the Strawberry Valley (for management purposes and to minimize impacts from heavy use) the vast majority of the valley is untouched. One can explore for hours without feeling man's presence.

While it may appear that volunteers are easy to come by, both the USFS and the Division of Wildlife Resources are always looking for



**Dedicated Hunter volunteers build a fence in the Strawberry Valley.**

volunteer help. They have received it from several large groups of volunteers that have provided invaluable assistance. One example that illustrates the difference one person in a large group can make is Jim Carter. He spends much of his time with two local non-profit organizations: The Friends of Strawberry Valley and the Strawberry Anglers Association. These groups are dedicated to improving the valley for everyone to enjoy. For more information about these groups, call Carter at (801) 269-0619.

These two groups are the "tip of the iceberg" as far as the many groups and individuals that provide volunteer help in the valley. Examples of other groups doing work include the DWR's Volunteer program (which includes members of the Dedicated Hunter program); the University of Utah's freshman class (which provides 80 to 150 students each year for projects); and, Park City's McPolin Elementary School students and students from other schools who have helped with planting projects.

Other volunteers include Audubon Society members, whose blue bird box efforts are important for the valley's bluebird population; the Utah National Guard's road building efforts

and other projects; the Salt Lake County Fish and Game Association, Trout Unlimited and other angling and wildlife groups help with many habitat projects; and, the Salt Lake Snowmobile Club's assistance with facilities in the valley. Many other recreation groups are also making a huge contribution to the valley's health. It would be staggering to know just how many people have helped the Strawberry Valley since 1907.

In addition to the efforts of large groups, individual and small group volunteer efforts are also welcome. Families going for a scenic drive or fishing trip to the valley, and cleaning up trash as part of their outing, are one example of the impact families can have. There are many ways that a person or group can get involved with habitat improvement projects. Contact any natural resource governmental agency, environmental organization, or hunting or fishing association to volunteer your time. One person's efforts can create improvements to a habitat area that last hundreds of years. Perhaps just as important, this type of volunteer work will give you a sense of stewardship, accomplishment and appreciation for Utah's fragile wildlife habitat. 🐟

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